

history. In fact, two great leaders from this region, Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower, descendants of pioneers, found common purpose on the larger stage of world history and led the wartorn nations of the 20th century toward the fulfillment of democracy's promise.

The creation of the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area will allow local and state historical groups and governments to more easily tell our interesting regional story. It will encourage collaborative planning on historical projects and provide important federal resource opportunities for historical preservation.

I am pleased to have worked with Mr. RYUN on this bill and am especially grateful he agreed to a number of my suggested changes to his original legislation. The final work product will mean good things for the people of our great states and for the history of our country.

The people of Missouri and Kansas have faced many challenges through the years, and our relationship has not always been as pleasant as it is today. But, through friendship and compromise, we will now more easily be able to explain our regional history in a way that is acceptable to both Missourians and Kansans.

Mr. MOORE of Kansas. Madam Speaker, I rise to express my strong support for S. 203, the National Heritage Areas Act of 2005, legislation establishing the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area.

The history of the Kansas-Missouri border region holds a special significance, not only for the people of those two states, but for the entire nation as well. Over 150 years ago, events took place in this region that served as a precursor to the horrors of the Civil War and which shaped the future of our country.

The Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area will serve as a vivid reminder of those historic events, as well as a much-needed place of remembrance and edification, enshrining the memories of those who gave their lives so that all Americans might live in freedom. It will also encourage us to develop a greater understanding of those tumultuous times in our Nation's history and strengthen efforts to preserve the region's historic sites and educate citizens in the stories and cultural resources of the region's legacy.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend those individuals who played such an important role in the progression of the Freedom's Frontier National Historic Area. The development of proposals has allowed for the creation of strong partnerships between representatives from both Kansas and Missouri and produced a unification of purpose that will leave a durable legacy to the next generation of stewards.

Events which took place in the Kansas-Missouri border region have undoubtedly been significant to the evolving story of American freedom. It is my hope that the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area will be a place where citizens from around the nation can increase their appreciation for our country's enduring struggle for freedom and liberty.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

MR. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I have no other speakers on this side of the aisle. I encourage our Members to support this important legislation and yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DRAKE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 203, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. HENSARLING. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

VALLE VIDAL PROTECTION ACT OF 2005

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3817) to withdraw the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest in New Mexico from location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3817

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Valle Vidal Protection Act of 2005".

SEC. 2. WITHDRAWAL OF VALLE VIDAL UNIT, CARSON NATIONAL FOREST, NEW MEXICO, FROM MINING LAWS.

(a) WITHDRAWAL.—Subject to subsection (b), the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest in New Mexico, which consists of 101,794 acres and is identified as Management Area 21 in the land and resource management plan for the Carson National Forest, is hereby withdrawn from—

(1) all forms of entry, appropriation, and disposal under the public land laws;

(2) location, entry, and patent under the mining laws; and

(3) operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws and mineral materials laws.

(b) TREATMENT OF EXISTING RIGHTS.—The withdrawal required by subsection (a) is subject to valid existing rights. If these existing rights are relinquished or otherwise acquired by the United States at any time after the date of the enactment of this Act, the lands that were subject to the rights shall be immediately withdrawn as provided in subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the gentleman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon.

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GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield my such time as I may consume.

H.R. 3817, introduced by New Mexico Representative TOM UDALL, would withdraw roughly 101,000 acres, known as the Valle Vidal Unit, from mineral exploration or development. This includes patent under mining claims and mineral leases for geothermal or mining materials. Any valid existing rights would continue to be recognized; but if those rights were relinquished or bought out, that area would also be withdrawn from the mining laws.

This area is known for its recreation, namely, horseback riding and hiking, livestock grazing and wildlife habitat. Currently, the Forest Service is revising its management plan for the Carson National Forest and is likely, through public comment and collaboration, to withdraw mineral development in this area independent of the legislation. The area in question is entirely within Mr. UDALL's district.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Ms. BORDALLO asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Madam Speaker, as the majority explained, H.R. 3817 withdraws the 101,794-acre Valle Vidal parcel in the Carson National Forest in New Mexico from location, entry, and patent under mining laws.

The Valle Vidal compromises some of the finest scenic wildlife and outdoor recreational resources in New Mexico. It is the home to the largest herd of elk in New Mexico and draws hunters from throughout the United States.

The Valle Vidal also contains important fish habitat for species such as the Rio Grande cutthroat trout. The Valle Vidal, furthermore, contains the headwaters of several watersheds and is an important source of fresh water in New Mexico.

H.R. 3817 is supported by a wide coalition of groups in New Mexico, including local elected officials, chambers of commerce, hunters, conservation groups, and businesses.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate our colleague, Representative TOM UDALL, who is the sponsor of H.R. 3817 and has worked tirelessly to craft and advance this legislation.

Madam Speaker, we support H.R. 3817.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, the Valle Vidal, located in the heart of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in my district in northern New Mexico, is a lush 100,000-acre mountain basin in the Carson National Forest. In 1982, the Pennzoil Company donated the unspoiled Valle Vidal to the people of the United States. It was the largest and most valuable gift of private land ever to the Forest Service.

This “valley of life”, as Valle Vidal translates in English, is home to abundant populations of Rocky Mountain wildlife, including the largest herd of elk in our State and some of the finest trout streams in the Nation. Sportsmen, outdoor recreationists, cattle ranchers, wildlife enthusiasts, and horseback riders all enjoy the Valle Vidal’s well-managed and accessible blend of wildland resources. The Valle Vidal is also a unique place for the Boy Scouts of America who have for decades come from all over the country to the adjacent Philmont Scout Ranch, the national high adventure base of the Boy Scouts of America. That is why the Philmont Staff Association, a non-profit organization of more than 2,200 current and former members of the staff the ranch, has publicly stated that the Valle Vidal should be maintained as a wilderness experience, free from the impact of coal bed methane development.

During my time in Congress, I have closely followed numerous events concerning both the Valle Vidal and our Nation’s energy situation. I have traveled to the Valle Vidal to witness its beauty and take part in various activities. I have introduced energy policy initiatives and reviewed regulatory action undertaken by the executive branch. I have also received thousands of calls, emails, faxes and letters against drilling and, I think I can safely say, none in support of it. As a result, I have come to the inescapable conclusion that the Valle Vidal should be protected from energy development. It is clear to me that the value of the Valle Vidal lies only in its broad public accessibility and natural beauty and not in its finite supply of energy.

New Mexicans and thousands of Americans are overwhelmingly against drilling in the refuge. These concerned citizens recognize that the Valle Vidal’s minimal contribution to our energy needs is not worth despoiling such an important ecological resource. The consequences are just too great. Moreover, many of my constituents, as confirmed by recent economic studies, recognize that the protection of special public lands like the Valle Vidal is good for local economies and that exploitation of these places for a few hours of energy will, in fact, hurt long-term economic growth and sustainability. Fundamentally, drilling in the Valle Vidal to create more energy is a false choice.

The very fact that this special place is being targeted for oil and gas leasing radically demonstrates the current and growing crisis with America’s energy situation. We must urgently find ways to balance the needs of supplying safe, reliable energy and of ensuring a livable and sustainable environment for the people of the United States.

To that end, I urge all of my colleagues in the House to support passage of The Valle Vidal Protection Act of 2005 to permanently protect the Valle Vidal from mineral extraction. The Valle Vidal’s ecological health and public accessibility should be protected so it can be enjoyed to the utmost by current and future generations. This ecosystem and its myriad of recreational opportunities are too valuable to the people of New Mexico and the Nation, and the energy gains too miniscule, to justify any damage to this special area.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Chairman POMBO and to Ranking Member RAHALL and especially to my colleague on the Forest Subcommittee, Chairman GREG

WALDEN for their work on the Valle Vidal Protection Act of 2005. I would also like to thank fellow New Mexicans Jim O’Donnell of the Coalition for the Valle Vidal, and Mayor Danny Cruz of Springer, rancher Alan Lackey, and Bill Schudlich of Trout Unlimited who all traveled to D.C. to testify on behalf of the Valle Vidal, and Oscar Simpson, Ed Olona, and Steve Capra who have worked diligently to build broad, meaningful grassroots support for this legislation. I would finally like to thank some of the staff who make everything we do here possible, including Johanna Polsenberg and Thomas Garcia on my staff, and Rick Healy and Jim Zoia on the staff of the Resources Committee.

Ms. BORDALLO. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3817.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

BLUNT RESERVOIR AND PIERRE CANAL LAND CONVEYANCE ACT OF 2006

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4301) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain parcels of land acquired for the Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal features of the initial stage of the Oahe Unit, James Division, South Dakota, to the Commission of Schools and Public Lands and the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks of the State of South Dakota for the purpose of mitigating lost wildlife habitat, on the condition that the current preferential leaseholders shall have an option to purchase the parcels from the Commission, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4301

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Blunt Reservoir and Pierre Canal Land Conveyance Act of 2006”.

SEC. 2. BLUNT RESERVOIR AND PIERRE CANAL.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BLUNT RESERVOIR FEATURE.—The term “Blunt Reservoir feature” means the Blunt Reservoir feature of the Oahe Unit, James Division, authorized by the Act of August 3, 1968 (82 Stat. 624), as part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin program.

(2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission” means the Commission of Schools and Public Lands of the State.

(3) NONPREFERENTIAL LEASE PARCEL.—The term “nonpreferential lease parcel” means a parcel of land that—

(A) was purchased by the Secretary for use in connection with the Blunt Reservoir feature or the Pierre Canal feature; and

(B) was considered to be a nonpreferential lease parcel by the Secretary as of January 1, 2001, and is reflected as such on the roster of leases of the Bureau of Reclamation for 2001.

(4) PIERRE CANAL FEATURE.—The term “Pierre Canal feature” means the Pierre Canal feature of the Oahe Unit, James Division, authorized by the Act of August 3, 1968 (82 Stat. 624), as part of the Pick-Sloan Missouri River Basin program.

(5) PREFERENTIAL LEASEHOLDER.—The term “preferential leaseholder” means a person or descendant of a person that held a lease on a preferential lease parcel as of January 1, 2001, and is reflected as such on the roster of leases of the Bureau of Reclamation for 2001.

(6) PREFERENTIAL LEASE PARCEL.—The term “preferential lease parcel” means a parcel of land that—

(A) was purchased by the Secretary for use in connection with the Blunt Reservoir feature or the Pierre Canal feature; and

(B) was considered to be a preferential lease parcel by the Secretary as of January 1, 2001, and is reflected as such on the roster of leases of the Bureau of Reclamation for 2001.

(7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation.

(8) STATE.—The term “State” means the State of South Dakota, including a successor in interest of the State.

(9) UNLEASED PARCEL.—The term “unleased parcel” means a parcel of land that—

(A) was purchased by the Secretary for use in connection with the Blunt Reservoir feature or the Pierre Canal feature; and

(B) is not under lease as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) DEAUTHORIZATION.—The Blunt Reservoir feature is deauthorized.

(c) ACCEPTANCE OF LAND AND OBLIGATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As a term of each conveyance under subsections (d)(5) and (e), respectively, the State may agree to accept—

(A) in “as is” condition, the portions of the Blunt Reservoir Feature and the Pierre Canal Feature that pass into State ownership;

(B) any liability accruing after the date of conveyance as a result of the ownership, operation, or maintenance of the features referred to in subparagraph (A), including liability associated with certain outstanding obligations associated with expired easements, or any other right granted in, on, over, or across either feature; and

(C) the responsibility that the Commission will act as the agent for the Secretary in administering the purchase option extended to preferential leaseholders under subsection (d).

(2) RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE.—An outstanding obligation described in paragraph (1)(B) shall inure to the benefit of, and be binding upon, the State.

(3) OIL, GAS, MINERAL AND OTHER OUTSTANDING RIGHTS.—A conveyance to the State under subsection (d)(5) or (e) or a sale to a preferential leaseholder under subsection (d) shall be made subject to—

(A) oil, gas, and other mineral rights reserved of record, as of the date of enactment of this Act, by or in favor of a third party; and

(B) any permit, license, lease, right-of-use, or right-of-way of record in, on, over, or across a feature referred to in paragraph (1)(A) that is outstanding as to a third party as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(4) ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS OF CONVEYANCE TO STATE.—A conveyance to the State under subsection (d)(5) or (e) shall be subject to the reservations by the United States and the conditions specified in section 1 of the Act of